

PLANNING REF : 252185
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Hill Cottage
: 8 Silverdale Road, Wargrave, Berkshire
: RG10 8EA
SUBMITTED BY : Mr And Mrs Ian & Melissa Kirker
DATE SUBMITTED : 10/02/2026

COMMENTS:

Revised Planning Application 252185 - Comments

Objections

We have previously responded and formally objected on 26 October 2025, 04 November 2025 and 15 January 2026 to the revised Planning Application 252185 for the commercial development at Thames Wood House Care Home, School Hill, Wargrave.

Our previous objections are based on the significant negative impact and substantial harm that the proposed rooftop HVAC units, Mechanical equipment and ductwork will have on the residential amenities of the surrounding area, specifically concerning the detrimental change in noise and visual intrusion, and the increase in height of the building. Our objections note that the revised Planning Application 252185 and resulting changes will cause substantial harm and negative impact to neighbour and residential amenity and local character, and there will be a significant negative impact on:

- Noise levels and noise pollution
- Visual Intrusion
- Loss of amenity
- Proximity to neighbours
- Aesthetic harm
- Insufficient mitigation.

The addition of these proposed rooftop HVAC units, mechanical equipment and ductwork is a fundamental change, which will cause significant nuisance and disturbance to the occupiers of neighbouring properties, especially those in Silverdale Road.

With the exception of the recently and hastily issued flawed Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) and the undated letter from Pozzoni Architects of approx. 15 Jan 2026, none of these detailed comments have been addressed by the Developer, nor sadly that we can see by the Wokingham Borough Council (WBC). We would request that our previous comments and objections be relooked at, in addition to our new comments and objections below.

We formally object (again) to the revised Planning Application 252185, including the NIA and revised GA plans and elevational drawings, plus the undated Pozzoni Architects letter.

We have also previously noted serious deficiencies in the neighbour notification of this Planning Application 252185. Only by word of mouth, most residents of Silverdale Road have been informed by ourselves. We are adjoining neighbours of the development, so we are meant to be notified formally by the WBC, rather than having to randomly find out about it by checking the WBC planning website.

Overall comments on Revised Planning Application 252185:

Considering the current Revised Planning Application 252185, we note/request that the following points be considered to refuse the application or place conditions on the application:

1. Substantial Harm to neighbours in Silverdale Road adjoining the development:

The proposed addition of the roof mounted HVAC and Mechanical Equipment and increased building height will cause substantial harm to neighbours' amenity and neighbouring properties and local character due to the negative impact of constant and unacceptable noise pollution, further obtrusive visual impact, further overbearing impact, further loss of light and further spoiling the enjoyment of our local environment. We refute the findings in the undated letter from Pozzoni Architects of approx. 15 Jan 2026, much of which is disingenuous and incorrect.

2. Building height:

In a Teams Meeting between Silverdale Road residents and WBC Planning on 9th February 2026, it was mentioned by WBC that the building height had increased by 0.4m. This figure needs checked and may relate to the overall height of the whole development adjacent to School Hill, but locally it is approx. 2-2.2m higher immediately behind the properties in Silverdale Road, therefore having significant impact to the residents of Silverdale Road.

3. NIA Deficiencies:

We have previously clearly noted serious deficiencies in our submission on 15 January 2026 on the base line for the recent Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) carried out by the Developer's Consultant, as have other submissions by residents of Silverdale Road in January 2026. For ease of reference, appreciating that many of our previous comments and objections are ignored, they are included again below. The WBC is requested to instruct the NIA to be recommissioned in conditions reflecting the site before the construction period, when the NIA should have been carried out. The current NIA report is seriously flawed and is unreliable, and therefore its findings and conclusions cannot be relied upon to support the Revised Planning Application 252185. Should the WBC Environmental Health team be unable to discover the same glaring deficiencies in the NIA, we really have a problem with the quality of those reviewing the Developer's submission. The revised Planning Application needs scrutinised to consider these points, as a minimum.

4. Amendment under Section 73 of Town and Country Planning Act not valid:

Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 allows Developers to apply for minor material amendments. However, this HVAC issue and its associated visual obtrusion, noise impact, and increase in building height is a major material amendment, and needs proper due diligence. The late addition of these roof mounted HVAC units is clearly a major change, as if nothing else it is adding 2-2.2m to

the roof sightline. Condition 2 of the original Planning Approval 222456 allows for variations; however, variations should not include such new issues as substantial HVAC, additional high mounted plant equipment and ducting, high screens and roof top maintenance pathways. It is a poor reflection on the Developer and the WBC that such fundamental design parameters were not included at all, and were totally overlooked in the original Planning Application 222456. Any decent Developer should have considered this at an early stage. There has been no fundamental or major revisions in terms of room numbers and facilities to the development during the design process, to warrant leaving it so late to add all the HVAC at the last minute. A design incorporating a dedicated HVAC plant room (typical for a commercial building of this nature) could have easily been included from day one in both the concept and preliminary design phases.

In a Teams Meeting between Silverdale Road residents and WBC Planning on 9th February 2026, we advised the WBC that the addition of substantial roof mounted HVAC is not ancillary equipment. It adds substantial harm to the adjoining neighbours.

A case was put forward by WBC that the HVAC is perhaps just design development. However, the requirement for HVAC was obvious from the start, and it should have been included in any concept or preliminary design scheme or submission. To add it 2.5 years later, is not development, it is very poor design and a deliberate convenient omission, knowing it could have fundamentally impacted the original approval process. It adds height, adds noise pollution, increases visual obstruction, increases the over bearing impact of the building, dominates the neighbours' views, and makes the development feel oppressive to the residents of Silverdale Road. It was bad enough looking at the side of an ugly and overbearing building, but now we will potentially have the same with industrial plant on the roof as well. It is totally out of keeping with the surrounding domestic village environment.

5. Pozzoni Architects letter of approx. 15 January 2026:
We refute the findings in the undated and anonymous letter from Pozzoni Architects of approx. 15 January 2026, much of which is disingenuous and incorrect.

The bulk and scale of the existing building is already incompatible with the local area. The addition of proposed rooftop HVAC units, Mechanical equipment and ductwork is a fundamental change which will increase the height of the building causing substantial harm. The increase in roof height immediately adjacent to our properties in Silverdale Road is not "a modest increase in height". Other comments such as "small section of roof" and "is not considered to result in any material harm" are disingenuous. The letter fails to address the deficiencies in the NIA Report. The letter fails to address why these amendments are being made at this late stage of the construction work, after 2.5 years.

Specific comments (updated) on the NIA are as follows:

6. Location of Noise Measurements not representative:
The noise measurement location on the south east of the site is

nowhere near the affected neighbours' properties in Silverdale Road, so the data results are unhelpful and not representative. The objections relating to the noise and visual intrusion are mainly from residents in Silverdale Road. Therefore, the location of the noise measurements is not relevant, and should have been to the north of the site, and immediately behind Nos. 4, 6 and 8 Silverdale Road.

Most of the bedrooms of the adjoining properties in Silverdale Road are at the rear of the properties, and therefore nearer to the care home. They are detrimentally affected. This again illustrates that the selected noise measurement location does not consider the properties most affected.

7. Background Noise base levels taken during Construction Activities: The day time noise measurements taken include the current construction work noise. Section 4.9 of the NIA notes "The noise environment was primarily influenced by construction activities." The measurements taken simply do not give a true reflection of the day time background noise to the south side of our property, including to our bedrooms, living areas and garden. The background base figures used in the NIA will be higher than the noise levels before the construction works. Prior to the construction works, the only noises in the back of our garden were badgers and foxes rummaging around, birds singing, plus the occasional noise of school children playing during lunch hour and breaks at the infant school, plus planes on approach to Heathrow Airport in certain wind or flight path routes. It was quiet and private, with regular and frequent periods of no noise at all. Currently, the background noise is dominated by the construction works, to the extent that we do not open windows or use our garden for relaxation. Therefore, the figures in the NIA are unreliable, and do not represent a true or actual reflection of the normal historical background noise levels. Lawrence Baker Ltd's claims of a representative background noise level are totally flawed, and have been artificially elevated (intentional or otherwise).

8. Noise Impact level is underestimated:

As noted above, the artificial elevation of the representative background noise level presented in the NIA have the additional impact of underestimating the additional impact of the roof mounted HVAC units, when compared to the real lower original background noise level.

9. Noise duration:

The 24-hour noise levels will be higher in warm or hot weather when the equipment will be used at or near to maximum capacity, which is when we, the neighbours and other local residents will have their windows open (including their bedroom windows at night). The enjoyment of gardens and amenities will be severely disrupted and substantially harmed for everyone affected by the noise levels. Those residents working from home will also be affected by the noise levels. Mitigation measures need to be further improved. Constant humming from the HVAC equipment during the night, or at other quiet times will cause substantial harm, and severely impact the quality of life and local amenity of those of us affected.

10. Assumptions about plant operation are not valid:

Section 5.6 of the NIA states that "it is unlikely that all plant items will operate simultaneously." However, in reality, the most probable time for full operation is during warm and hot weather (which is becoming more frequent and extreme with global warming) when neighbouring residents to the care home will have their windows open for natural ventilation. Therefore, this is an assumption that cannot be relied upon, and the worst-case (and in this case the most likely) scenario should be considered and modelled.

Other comments on the Revised Planning Application:

11. Effectiveness of acoustic screens:

The visual appearance, long-term durability and effectiveness of any proposed acoustic screens needs to be presented and discussed. They will be exposed to wind, and must be sturdy and visually tolerable.

12. Failure to relocate HVAC Plant:

The Developer has failed to address any of our and our neighbours' comments/objections, including giving proper consideration to our proposed solution of relocating the HVAC plant and ancillary equipment to the south side of the building on the side walls or at ground level on the south side where there is plenty of space (enclosed within appropriate noise-reducing enclosures or housing with air flow) in order to minimise the detrimental noise and visual impacts. This could help mitigate some of the problems causing substantial harm.

Section 6.4 of the NIA states that the "option of completely enclosing the noisiest items of plant within acoustic enclosures has been

reviewed and discounted due to a lack of available space and the resultant loss of adequate airflow to the plant items." This may not be correct, and should be interrogated/investigated further. There appears room on the south side of the development for some of the HVAC units. The Developer's lack of planning in their design is not a justification for locating the units on the roof, causing unnecessary maximum visual and noise intrusion to the residents of Silverdale Road.

13. Alternative Placement / Relocation of HVAC units and ancillary equipment to the south side:

As noted above, the noise levels can be reduced/mitigated and the unsightly and intrusive visual impact can be avoided if all or some of the proposed HVAC units and ancillary equipment are relocated to the south side of the building on the walls or at ground level on the south side.

Definitely, do not place at the east end, which directly abuts our garden, and our close neighbours to the east.

The south elevation is shielded by trees and vegetation and a rarely used walkway, whereas the north and east elevations abut the back of our garden, and others in Silverdale Road and Beverley Gardens.

14. Visual and Acoustic Impact of Added Equipment not assessed:

The external HVAC units and ancillary ducting and piping now being proposed at the last minute, were not included in the original

Planning Application 222456, or alluded to on any drawings. This omission may have materially affected the original Planning Decision and Approval. The additional height, visual and noise impact have never been properly consulted on. A redesign should have been carried out to enable the ground floor siting of a proper acoustically enclosed HVAC facility or Plant room to the south of the buildings. Hopefully, it is not too late to do this. It is not fair to residents that this material change to the original Planning Application 222456 is being retrospectively accepted. In accordance with Core Strategy Policies CP1 and CP3, the WBC are meant to ensure that no nuisance or disturbance is caused to the occupiers of neighbouring properties, and to safeguard the residual amenities of neighbouring properties.

Conclusion and Summary:

The revised Planning Application 252185 and NIA and revised GA plans and elevational drawings, plus the undated Pozzoni Architects letter do not specifically or fully address the potential harmful and negative impact of the rooftop HVAC units and Mechanical equipment and ducting on nearby residential properties, including the properties in Silverdale Road adjoining the development.

We request that as a minimum, conditions are placed on the application and that more options are considered and that a new, properly executed NIA is carried out, namely addressing the following:

- Use valid and representative baseline measurements, that do not include current construction related noise.
- Location of measurements to be immediately behind Nos. 4, 6, 8 Silverdale Road.
- Propose and investigate alternative and more effective solutions, such as using quieter units, better quality acoustic screens/enclosures or relocating to the south side addressing the concerns of all the neighbours to the development, i.e. to properly include those in Silverdale Road.

Still of relevance, we refer to the Nexus Planning letter of 02 December 2022, supposedly addressing the issues raised by the public in their comments on the original Planning Application 222456. As the building work has progressed, it is now obvious that the developer/owner has in fact not addressed the issues raised by the public and local neighbours. In particular, (and just one example of this) the building height is not consistent with the general height of domestic development in the area. The comment that "the proposed building height will not dominate the surrounding area or surrounding properties" is sadly not the case, and in relationship to Revised Planning Application 252185 for new HVAC, this is made worse such that it is now causing substantial harm. The development including these HVAC additions is not sensitive (as promised) to those of us who view and back onto it in Silverdale Road and adjacent roads.

The unsightly view of rooftop HVAC units and ancillary equipment is totally out of keeping with the surrounding residential area, and affects the view from our property at 8 Silverdale Road and all the neighbouring properties in Silverdale Road, and adjacent roads.

Our rear garden, our windows at the rear and side, which include our kitchen, dining room, family room, lounge room, 3 of our 4 bedrooms and ensuite, all look out on to this unsightly view. Similarly, this is also the case and the same for our neighbours at No's. 4, 6, 10 and 12 Silverdale Road, and for neighbours in Beverley Gardens.

We, therefore object to the latest Revised Planning Application 252185 for the reasons stated above, and all those raised in our very detailed objections of 26 October 2025, 04 November 2025, and 10 January 2026.

We request that due the substantial harm being caused, the deficiencies in the NIA, and lack of mitigation, that the latest Revised Planning Application 252185 be refused, or that conditions are placed on the application:

Ian Kirker, C.Eng., FICE
Melissa Kirker